

# Buddhism in a Nutshell

All the teachings of the Buddha's can be included into two levels which are the teachings cause us to be born in heaven and human worlds and, the teachings cause us to get rid of suffering and attain the final bliss of liberation, enlightenment or Nirvana.

When the Buddha preached His teachings, He considered the listeners' intelligence and how long he or she can live. And He has an order in His speech which is generosity, virtue, renunciation etc. First, The Buddha normally preached the path of reaching heaven and human worlds because the biggest risk is the ability to fall into hell in next life. Hence, the Buddha preached the three meritorious deeds which are the importance of practicing generosity, morality and meditation to overcome rebirth in the hell. This is the first level in Buddhism. When someone practices this path, he or she can gain happiness in this life itself. The Buddha says clearly that practicing merits means gaining happiness. If someone has done a lot of meritorious deeds in his or her life, he or she has accumulated a lot of happiness in his life. This behavior causes happiness not only hereafter but in this short life itself. When we fulfill these three meritorious deeds, our mind is pure and calm. That pure mind can gain us longevity, good complexion, comfort, strength and finally happiness. When someone always does wholesome acts in his life, deities and departed relatives also bless him. All of these meritorious deeds cause him to be reborn in the heaven or human world. How every practicing merits is not enough to overcome the Sansaric Journey completely. That's why the Supreme Buddha kindly pointed out the next level.

The second level of the Buddha's teaching is the path for getting rid of all kinds of sufferings and to overcome Sansaric journey. Here the Buddha has pointed out three disciplines which are virtue, concentration (or tranquility) and wisdom. For this path, first we have to gain the knowledge about impermanence (*Anicca*) and the dependent origination (*paticca samuppāda*). If we have a clear knowledge about arising and ceasing of five aggregates, we are ready to practice this path perseveringly. Here, only knowledge is not enough, but reflection (*Yoniso manasikāra*) and practice (*Dhammānudhamma patipatti*) are also important according to the knowledge. When we practice this path, we can see the results as much as we practice. Visible result is the one of the results practicing this teaching.

When we do evil, our mind is polluted. That polluted mind causes suffering in this life and hereafter. That is why the Buddha said not to do any evil. Not doing evil is not enough for happiness, but also we have to cultivate good for the real happiness with a meritorious mind. Buddhism emphasizes the three merits for the happiness. The three meritorious deeds of generosity (*dāna*), virtue (*sīla*) and meditation (*bhāvanā*) cause us to succeed in this life and hereafter. If a person has done a lot of meritorious deeds in this life, it means that his mind is rich in merits. A Meritorious mind can gain happiness. When we do good deeds, it means our mind is pure, calm and quiet. A pure mind can bring happiness to our life. Further we have to understand the cause of suffering and

getting rid of suffering in this life itself. That is why the Buddha explained how to purify one's mind. Virtue, concentration or tranquility and wisdom with understanding of dependent origination cause us to get rid of all sufferings and develop real happiness. Virtue means a very high level of discipline in behavior and speech with right vision. With a good discipline, if a person focuses his mind in a particular meritorious object such as loving kindness or breathing meditation, he can concentrate his mind with pure thoughts. With that concentration, he can reflect on the world reality according to impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*) and selflessness (*anatta*) in the correct way. As a result, one can live without desire and hatred because there is no delusion. When he investigates that present moment, he has only present moment as nothing comes to the present from the past and nothing goes to the future from the present. The most valuable and interesting explanation in Buddhism is impermanence. It is said in Buddhism; **Not being occurred (in the past) comes to an occurrence. Being occurred (at the present) will not come to (the future) occurrence** (අනුක්ඛං සම්භුතං හුක්ඛං න භවිස්සති). This is the nature of impermanence that Buddhism illustrates. He sees the arising and ceasing of all his experiences at the moment very well. Then he can live as a person seeing the truth of world reality in a new fresh way. This is the ultimate truth that Buddhism teaches us to be able to get rid of all sufferings.

According to Buddhism, our success, happiness completely depends on how far we have practiced and develop concentration and insight meditation. The duration of keeping our mind in a particular wholesome object and reflecting on impermanence decide our skillfulness.

## The Main Doctrines in Buddhism

(To practice in our day to day life in the name of happiness)

**The Triple Gem :-** (The Most valuable things that we received as the result of previous merits)

- The Buddha (Buddha's Enlightenment)
- The Dhamma (Buddha's Teachings)
- The Sangha (Buddha's Noble Disciples)

**The Five Precepts :-**

1. Abstaining from taking lives (*Pānātipāta veramani*)
2. Abstaining from stealing (*Adinnādānā veramani*)
3. Abstaining from sexual misconduct (*Kāmesumiccācārā veramani*)
4. Abstaining from false speech (*Musāvādā veramani*)
5. Abstaining from taking intoxication drinks and drugs causing heedlessness (*Surāmeraya maddapamādattānā veramani*)

**The Three Levels of practicing Buddha's message :-**

**First level :-**

1. Education (*Sippam/ suta*),
2. Economy (*Dhanam*),
3. Health (*ārogya*),
4. Morality (*Samacariyā*),
5. Good Friendship (*Kalyānamitta*)

**Second level** (Three Meritorious Deeds) :-

1. Generosity (*Dāna*)
2. Virtue or Morality (*Sīla*)
3. Meditation (*Bhāvanā*)

(The Three Friends those who put the treasure inside)

**Third Level** (Three Disciplines) -

1. Virtue (*Sīla*)
2. Concentration (*Samādhi*)
3. Wisdom (*Paññā*)

**The Vision in Buddhism –**

1. Understanding of Karmic Law – Not to fall into hell
2. Understanding of the Dependent Origination –  
To overcome Suffering at the moment

**The Mission in Buddhism -**

1. Doing Good: Generosity, Virtue and Meditation
2. Practicing Three Disciplines : Virtue, Concentration and Wisdom

**The Ultimate Goal of life :-** Happiness (Keeping mind away from all defilements)

**The Best Friend**

- Mindfulness (*Sati*)

**The Fourfold Mindfulness -**

1. The contemplation of matter or body (*Kāyanupassanā*)
2. The contemplation of feelings (*Vedanānupassanā*)
3. The contemplation of mind or consciousness (*Cittānupassanā*)
4. The contemplation of mental formations (*Dhammanupassanā*)

**Five Spiritual Faculties -**

1. Confidence (*Saddhā*)
  2. Energy (*Viriya*)
  3. Mindfulness (*Sati*)
  4. Concentration (*Samādhi*)
  5. Wisdom (*Paññā*)
- (Our real Heritage, Dowry)

**The Highest knowledge that a person can gain for getting rid of suffering –**

1. The Knowledge about the law of the karmic law  
(*Kammassakatā Sammāditti*)
2. The Knowledge of the Dependent Origination  
(*Ariyasammāditti*)

**Enemies that we should get rid of –** Greed (*Lobha*), Hatred (*Dhosa*), Delusion (*Moha*)

(Defilements/ Unwholesomeness)

(The enemies those who steal our good internal human values)

**Dhamma Reflexion -** Loving Kindness/Friendliness (*Mettā*), Honesty (*Uju*), Wisdom (*Paññā*)

- The Four Noble Truths** – 1. The suffering (*Dukkha sacca*)  
 2. The cause of suffering (*Samudaya sacca*)  
 3. The cessation of suffering (*Nirodha sacca*)  
 4. The path that leads to cessation of suffering (*Magga sacca*)

- The Noble Eight Fold Paths** – Right Understanding (*Sammā Ditthi*)  
 Right Thoughts (*Sammā samkappa*)  
 Right Speech (*Sammā Vācā*)  
 Right Action (*Sammā kammantha*)  
 Right Livelihood (*Sammā ājiva*)  
 Right Effort (*Sammā Vāyāma*)  
 Right Mindfulness (*Sammā sathi*)  
 Right Concentration (*Sammā samādhi*)

### **Spirit/ Co-re /Base / Heart / Essence of Buddhism**

- Dependent Origination/ Cause and effect (*Paticcasamuppāda*)  
 (The Foundation to understand impermanence)

- Five Aggregates :-** 1. Matter (*Rupa*) 2. Feeling (*Vedanā*) 3. Perception (*Saññā*)  
 4. Mental Formation (*Sankhāra*) 5. Consciousness (*Viññāna*)

### **How to investigate these five aggregates? As;**

1. Arising (*Samudaya*) 2. Ceasing (*Atthamgama*) 3. Gratification (*Assāda*)  
 4. Dangers (*ādinava*) 5. Letting go = Liberation (*Nissarana*)

### **Causes to develop wisdom – (*Pannavuddhi Karanani*)**

1. Association with a good friend who explains the Buddha's real message  
 (*Sappurisa sansevo*)  
 2. Listening to the Buddha's Message (*Saddhamma savanam*)  
 3. Wise Reflection (*Yoniso manasikāro*)  
 4. Practice (*Dhammānudhamma patipatti*)

### **The Buddha's Message in a nutshell**

– Get rid of all evil, do what is good, purify one's mind

*'Sabba pāpassa akaranam kusalassa upasampadā,  
 Sacitta pariyo dapanam etam buddānasānam'.*

All above doctrines can be ordered in a particle method.

They are;

1. Associating noble friends who explain the Buddha's message (*Sappurisa samseva*)
2. Listening to Buddha's message, the Dhamma (*Saddhammasavana*)
3. Confidence in Buddha's enlightenment (*Saddhā*)
4. Wise investigation (*Yonisa manasikāra*)
5. Mindfulness and clear comprehension. (*Sati sampajañña*)
6. Discipline in senses (*Indriya samvara*)
7. Three Disciplines in mental, verbal and behavioral acts (*Thrividha sucarita*)
8. The Fourfold Mindfulness (*Satipatthāna*)
9. Seven Enlightenment factors (*Satta bojjhanga*)
10. Gaining the full knowledge and liberation from all kinds of sufferings. (*Vijjāvimutti*)

**SMS Concept in Buddhism:**    S=Slowly    M=Mindfully    S=Silently



May the Triple Gem Bless you!

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May all beings be well, happy and peaceful!

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(Poson Sil Program for Sunday School Children at Los Angeles Buddhist Vihara in Pasadena. 06/16/2019)